



**Department of Veterans Affairs
Medical Center
Wilkes-Barre, PA**



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Outpatient Clinics

Allentown ★ Columbia County ★ Sayre ★ Schuylkill County ★ Tobyhanna ★ Williamsport

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the hard work each of you has extended in serving our veterans. In the spirit of the season, I would like to share a few of your achievements during FY 04.



*Roland E. Moore
Director, WBVAMC*

- Treated 40,688 unique veterans
- Renovated a new Short Procedure Unit
- Implemented Open Access/Patient Driven Scheduling and met all clinic access standards - best in VISN
- Attained \$139,808.04 above our MCCF goal of \$11,825,008.04 (11.24% increase over FY03)
- Developed plans to open the Northampton County CBOC (opened December 13, 2004)
- Formalized the Telemedicine Program and completed approximately 1,000 visits
- Redesigned the consult tracking process, eliminating 130,000 pending consults
- Attained exceptional performance in 7 of 7 performance clinics (Mental Health, Audiology, Cardiology, Eye Care, GI, Orthopedics and Urology) for Wait Times and Next Available Appointment
- Exceeded the national average for patients being seen by provider in 20 minutes or less
- Achieved maximum Quadrant I scores for 5 of 5 clinical interventions
- Implemented instant recognition awards and increased awards/recognitions from 243 to 817
- Received a total of 96,152 volunteer hours

These accomplishments attest to your dedication of providing our veterans the best quality care. *Best wishes for a Happy Holiday Season!*



*Fred Searles, Commander,
American Ex-POWs, Keystone
Chapter, addresses attendees
at ceremony.*

POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY - National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day was observed on Tuesday, September 14, 2004. It was a day for America to honor and remember those veterans who gave up their freedom to protect ours. Thousands of veterans who survived enemy incarceration during World War II and the Korean War are with us today, as are those who served in Vietnam and more recent military operations. To mark this important day, the Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center honored our former POW/MIAs during a ceremony in the Chapel. Fred Searles, Commander of the American Ex-Prisoners of War, Keystone Chapter, led attendees in the POW Pledge of Allegiance; and William Smith, Chaplain for the American Ex-Prisoners of War, Keystone Chapter gave the invocation. Alan Kurlansky, POW/MIA Program Chairperson, presented the Missing Man Ceremony.



PATRIOTS' DAY – A DAY OF REMEMBRANCE - Wilkes-Barre VAMC employees united with veterans and all freedom-loving people across our country in remembering the victims of the terrorist attacks on our country three years ago. In the wake of these assaults, America responded with extraordinary bravery, love, and generosity for our fallen brethren and their families. A remembrance ceremony was held on Friday, September 10th at 12:00 Noon in the Medical Center's Chapel to remember the victims, to honor those who exhibited great courage and renew that determination.



AWARDS

MEDICAL CENTER RECEIVES AWARDS - On September 30th our Medical Center received the Secretary's Award "for achieving the highest percentage of veteran-owned small business awards" and a second overall in Small Business Awards for FY03. Ms. Gail Wegner, Deputy Director for Veterans Enterprises from VA Central Office, presented the award during the VA's Employee Rewards and Recognition Program.

EMPLOYEE AWARDS CEREMONY - The Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center conducted an Awards Ceremony on September 30th. Medical Center employees were recognized with a total of 396 Special Contribution Awards. Eighty-one employees were recognized for their years of service, which range from 10 to 35 years. Seventy-nine employees received Certificates of Appreciation. *Congratulations!*

VA MEDICAL CENTER EMPLOYEES LEND A HELPING HAND - In September, Wilkes-Barre VAMC was contacted by the Northeast Chapter of the American Red Cross seeking staffing assistance in completing Red Cross and FEMA forms from individuals affected by Hurricane Ivan. The Medical Center in cooperation with our Local AFGE 1699 sought volunteers and was able to assist in sending a contingent of approximately ten staff to assist. They are:

Chris Albert
Jean Bonn
Sandy Felichko
Laurie Ferrell Austin
Jennifer Garcia

Mary Noon
Tammy Oppelt
Tammy Pavlick
Linda Sheperis-Stall
Karen Williams



*Artist Judi Keats, and
Poet Maggie Martin*

ARTIST IN RESIDENCY PROGRAM - In April 1994, a 10-week pilot "Artist in Residency" program was initiated at the Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center. The goal was to provide an opportunity for personal awareness and self-expression through the use of various art forms for veterans in the Substance Abuse program. Veterans were able to discover, or rediscover, talents within themselves while exploring feelings in a supportive environment that validated their efforts.

Ten years later the journey of self-discovery through creative outlets continues. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of Recreational Therapy; Occupational Therapy; SAR RTP; and our artist, Judi Keats; and poet, Maggie Martin, veterans continue to use creativity to promote growth and healing.

An art and poetry exhibit was held in August to recognize the accomplishments of this program and the talents of the artists, especially Maggie Martin who ended her time with us. She is relocating to New Hampshire. Her contributions were significant to the program through the years.



SENATOR RICK SANTORUM PRESENTS MEDALS TO VETERANS – On August 26, 2004, Senator Rick Santorum, visited our Medical Center to present medals to approximately eleven veterans from WWII and the Korean War. The ceremony was scheduled and coordinated by the Senator's office. Approximately 70 veterans, families, and friends attended the ceremony. One of our student volunteers studying broadcast journalism interviewed Senator Santorum and medal recipients for the VA News program. Local news media also reported on the ceremony.



PATIENTS' CARNIVAL – Patients from our Nursing Home Care Unit and Medical Center were treated to a day of fun on Sunday, September 12th. Many veteran service organizations hosted the annual Patients' Carnival. The patients enjoyed games, gifts, refreshment and music. Everyone enjoyed the music by Homespun Bluegrass.

Left - Nursing Home resident, Henry Harter enjoying the Carnival.



First row: Rudy Gresham, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs; Elaine Palance; Jack Palance; Kathy Makowski; Jean Daniels; and, Helene Becker. Second row: William K. Grossman, MD; Roland E. Moore; Jane Maxwell; MaryAnn Novak; Lori Woods; Gail Mangan; Kathy Chuzas; Kathy Cottone; Chris Weaver, and Mark Donnelly. Third Row: Jean Maxwell; Sandy Kijek; Denise Plis; and Jerry Harchar.

ACTOR JACK PALANCE VISITS MEDICAL CENTER - One of the screen's most famous actors, Jack Palance visited the Medical Center on October 6th. Mr. Palance addressed an audience of over 250 people who were patients, volunteers, friends of the VA, and employees. Jack Palance (born Walter Palanuik) was born in Lattimer Mines, near Hazleton. There was great media coverage from Channel News 13 (Hazleton), WNEP-TV, WBRE-TV, Citizen's Voice, and the Times Leader. Accompanying Mr. Palance was his wife, Elaine, and Mr. Rudy Gresham, Senior Advisor to the Secretary.



HALLOWEEN PARTY - Employees Association members enjoyed a Halloween Party on Friday, October 29th. Many employees attended the party dressed in costume. Voluntary Service sponsored a pumpkin decorating contest. Pumpkins were submitted by services and sections throughout the Medical Center. It was *very difficult* for our judges to select the best pumpkin. All entries were extremely creative! Thank you to everyone who participated in the contest!

Congratulations to the winners!! They are:

1st Place -	2nd Floor NHCU
2nd Place -	Release of Information
3rd Place -	Physical Therapy
	9th Floor
	SARTRP
	Short Procedure Unit
	1 West Outpatient Clinic



CUSTOMER SERVICE TIP O' THE MONTH OCTOBER 2004

How many chances do you get to make a first impression? Only one! A customer or patient's first impression of you and the organization that you represent sets the tone for the entire dialogue or encounter. So, in order to get off on the right foot with customers and patients, make sure to convey a professional, upbeat attitude -- and a willingness to serve -- right from the beginning!!